

An Interview with Herbert Harris II

Washington, D.C.

2 and 13 March 2001

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Session 1. 2 March 2001

Schrag: Zachary Schrag is interviewing Mr. Herbert Harris.

It is Friday, March 2, 2001, at a little before two o'clock in the afternoon. We are in his office, in the Watergate, in Washington, D.C. I'd like to start with your election to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. You were elected in 1968, is that right?

Harris: Sixty-seven.

Schrag: Elected in November 1967.

Harris: And came on the board in 1968.

Schrag: When did you joint the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission?

Harris: That same year.

Schrag: The same time. So, how did that happen? How did you become a transportation person within the Board?

Harris: You have to back a little bit there. I was active in Federation of Citizens Associations in Fairfax County, and became president of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Association in 1961. We were all kind of pioneers in Fairfax county. The first community I lived in, Bryn Mawr, had no bus service. It was right on Shirley Highway. The only bus

service was out of Springfield and that went clear through Alexandria. I had a great challenge and a great feeling of accomplishment in that community because of all the problems that you had to deal with at that point. You had a very antiquated and, to some extent, corrupt county government. I used to say I found out two things. Number one, how inefficient a county government could be and, number two, how easy it was to change it.

Fighting to get bus service to Springfield, we joined with some other civic association types, and we got it. I realized how important it was to the communities out there. You could get on a 4-lane Shirley Highway with automobiles, and see that back up day after day. And the mixing bowl at the Pentagon, and all that type of thing. It was so funny. When we finally convinced AB&W to put the bus service into Springfield, they only stopped at entrance to my community, Bryn Mawr. So I went back to them with flags flying, and convinced them to come into the community, and put in two stops. Parenthetically, I always joke about that, about two weeks after I accomplished, and I was so proud of it, one of my neighbors came over to complain. Who

in the world got the idea of running those heavy buses through these fragile streets in our community. That's something you'd better learn about as far as government and civic work is concerned. No matter what you do, you're going to get complaints. It was that exposure to the need for transportation that I brought into the civic association work and county-wide work I started doing. You just had to look at the backups that would occur and say somehow this had to be solved. And, number one, there's no reason to believe that adding another lane, or another two lanes, or another three lanes, is going to do anything more than generate more traffic and create more traffic jams.

It was actually in, probably, 1960, '61, when as president of federation, and vice president, we started meeting in an Interfederation council of civic associations, from Prince George's County, Montgomery, and the District of Columbia. It was a fairly fragile group, but it was actually the one that Stolzenbach really started with. That's where I met him, and started looking at some of the work that was being done. It met with my philosophy, almost a religion. I thought, somehow we've got to make this

happen. At the time, with the successes I'd had achieving local things, I thought, why not? I didn't know, at the time, my good friend and colleague from Kentucky, the congressman.

Schrag: Cleatus Barnett? Oh, Natcher?

Harris: Natcher. I wasn't at all clear about highway lobbies, or that sort of thing. But I wasn't a babe in the woods, either. I was doing some legislative work in Washington. It was really that that started it. When I got through my efforts trying to reform the county board, and trying to convince people on the X1? X2? Bus, which we finally got AB&W to run out the parkway to Mt. Vernon, where I lived. I used to talk to the guys there about the need of doing something fundamental. An awful lot of them thought it was a pipe dream, but to me it looked so obvious, and so clear that you had to do it.

I'm going to tell you this, as I speak here, a funny thing that happens in your life. In 1967, I had five children, and we decided to go to the fair in Montreal. That little French-speaking mayor out there had gotten himself one heck of a metro system in there. That fair was held on an island; it was

constructed on an island. And I saw how mass transit could work. Two hundred, three hundred thousand people on that island at 9 o' clock, and by 9:15 they were all gone. Also, I always laughed about seeing two nuns getting on one of the crowded Metro cars with their elbows out, getting on there. I thought, well, if it can go that far, it's going to work. From that standpoint, it became such an enthusiastic thing for me. I imagined what could be done with central Washington, 4ths of July or what have you, if you could put in a system that could move people in and out that way. To the extent I used to say, I don't care whether you charge them or not. The fact that we can get them on there and use it would be as much of a payment to the community and the cost of other resources.

OK. If it sounds like a speech, I don't mean it to be.

Schrag: No, it's very helpful. A couple questions here. One, is that you say you didn't believe that adding a couple more lanes would help anything. But that seems to have been the dominant view among, certainly, suburbanites, and a lot of politicians, and the highway lobby, in the 1960s. Did you feel

that you were able to convince others of your view?
How did you come to that exotic viewpoint, such as
it was? Why not build more roads?

Harris: As I say, and I said it I guess at length, actually
looking at it, I think maybe living that close to
Shirley Highway, and seeing the developments
occurring, and seeing the traffic. I remember one
meeting at which two guys from the Prince William
civic associations showed up. As I was talking to
them [one] said he commuted to Washington every day.
I said, I can't imagine anyone from Dale City
commuting all the way to Washington. Today, of
course, you them commuting from Fredericksburg
without any thought about it. In any sort of thing
like this, you look at it, and get a viewpoint. And
no, it was not a readily acceptable viewpoint at the
time. But my orientation—my work in Washington was
entirely separated from my orientation in Fairfax.
It was a community orientation. It was doing things
for the community. I got things like a public school
built in our community, a zoning back where they had
tried to encroach commercial right onto the
community. A park, and swimming pool, and that sort
of thing. It was working on those kind of problems

that gave you, I think, the drive of saying what I told you at the beginning: how relatively easy it was to change things if you knew where you were going.

And as you looked at it, as I say, it was just terribly obvious. And I was using the bus at this time.

Schrag: Even before you got the buses extended, or once you—

Harris: By this time, I'm talking now into the sixties. I have moved to a house out next to Mt. Vernon, and that's what I am talking about. The 11-X it was, the 11-X bus I was using. But I had used it over there, after we got the buses extended, too. You look at a community and you start dealing with individual problems, and you say, the expense of parking! I'm getting into the esoterics of politics now. You had folks who were maybe working for the government. They had the parking; they weren't quite as upset about this. But even there they had to worry about car pools, with all the glamour of car pools. Where one has to stay, and one has to leave, and so forth. Those problems became obvious. But it was basically just a conclusion on my part. You look at an overall

policy like that and say, where are the solutions? The real solutions. Over and over again, once you get the thought established, it's sort of—gets buttressed each time you look at another situation. I'm hopping ahead a little bit. The Shirley Highway gets down to what they called the mixing bowl then. They're trying to call Springfield the mixing bowl now. The mixing bowl was at the Pentagon, of course, with this total tie-up of those roads. Which they moved to reconstruct it all, a massive reconstruction job. Then they start to expand Shirley Highway.

One of the things I fought for the hardest, when they expanded Shirley Highway, was to come up with restricted access lanes on 95, on Shirley Highway. My concept, I have to say, was basically those lanes' being restricted for buses. I just felt like, oh wow. Put the people in the car, watch those the buses whiz by in the center lane. I've got it sold! It was funny, when they first went in; I'll tell you this story. They didn't have the mixing bowl really completely constructed at the time. We got the bus service, the lanes, in from Springfield down to Shirlington. We started the buses right away on

that. This is when I'm on the board; this has got to be, '68, '69 maybe. I'll never forget the little supervisor from Springfield. We were standing as the ceremony to Shirlington had to go back onto the regular lanes. The press was there, and maybe some television. The buses getting back into the lanes was causing this terrible backup on the highway lanes. These people standing there, and we're in the middle, where the restricted access lanes were. Don Boland was his name. He starts seeing people in the cars that he knew, and he was waving to them, you know. I looked over and told Don: Don, if you can take a little advice, I would not identify myself with this project right at this moment. [laughter] As I saw things like that actually happening, coming down, and saw the success of the guys on the Hill, bravely taking on the Appropriation bill-1970? That broke Natcher's stranglehold on the funds. They did that on the floor, and fighting an appropriations chairman on the floor is a gutty thing to do. But there were a lot of guys there that felt strongly about it too, and fought it, and won. Not completely at the time, but at least it meant they could go ahead, and they could start looking toward

groundbreaking at least. Jumping ahead, Bob Giaimo was one of them. There was the guy also from Washington, a great fellow.

When I was trying to get my legislation through, Stark-Harris bill, it was uphill. The White House was against it, and darned if their lobbyist wasn't a guy by the name of Herkey Harris. [Hubert L. "Herkey" Harris, assistant director of the Office of Management and Budget].

Schrag: Whose lobbyist—the White House?

Harris: Yes. Actually he was at OMB, but he was doing a lot of the work. Carter's friend was running OMB at the time. Anyway, Herkey was doing the work. Bob Giaimo was at that point chairman of the budget committee. The Carter people were working with him. It was interesting. They went to him, to try to get him to keep me from, stop me from bringing my bill to the floor. I had written those guys—there were a hundred of them still in Congress who had voted for breaking the deadlock in 1970. I wrote to, I had written to all of them addressed to "Dear Father of Metro."
[laughter] And so when Herkey— It's a great story, because Bob came to me, and says you know, Herkey

Harris came to me to try to get me to lead the fight against approving this? I told him—I said, what did you say, Bob? He said, I told him, he says, Good Lord, I'm the father of Metro! [laughter] How can I fight it? It's crazy! Anyway, that's part of the drama around the thing.

Schrag: We're getting away from the chronology, but that doesn't matter. I can sort it out later. Why don't we talk about Stark-Harris, because in some ways that's one of the most dramatic episodes, that I don't understand at all. I've read the hearings, I've read the Congressional Record, I've read the newspaper accounts. As I understand it, from 1974, when the budget estimate goes up to 4.5 billion at that point, to the various studies, the Alternatives Analysis, all the rest, it really looked like Metro was in very big trouble. You had two presidents against you: first Ford, then Carter. And at this point, no one is pretending any more that the bonds will be paid off. [laughter] All pretense is gone, light is shining in, you're talking about seven billion dollars—

Harris: And Natcher's saying, I told you so!

Schrag: And Natcher's saying, I told you so. It's one thing for you to unite the Maryland and Virginia delegations, but that's a handful of votes. How did you get two hundred some votes for this thing? I just don't understand it.

Harris: Well, I already told you about part of it.

[laughter]

Schrag: The Dear Colleague letter?

Harris: The father of Metro thing.

Schrag: Does that work in Congress? Is that the kind of thing—

Harris: Oh, you betcha, you betcha. You'd be surprised at how few people in Congress don't have an ego. And there is, if I may say, this is what you have to understand, an underlying— Where did I get mine? I got mine by looking and saying, this is the problem of the day. Transportation as far as commuting is concerned, and what have you. There's only a long-term solution. Somehow we've got to get back to mass transit as a fundamental thing. The Los Angeles Red Cars went. We used to have, as you may know, and interurban system from Washington all the way out to Mt. Vernon. A lot of folks don't know about that.

I'd never seen it, but you'd seen all those go. And the buses, and then the trolley buses, and what have you.

And so, there is an underlying feeling among congressmen and senators and what have you of wanting to do what is good. We defame that so terribly. We say, they are thinking of their heritage, or legacy, or what have you. I see a lot more of the other thing than has ever been written about or the media seems to care to report. That there's—if you don't get a great deal of self-satisfaction of what you're doing, it's awful hard to stay with it. An awful lot of the pay is that. At that point, I had been on the Metro board for four years, meeting every week. So I knew what the problem was, I knew how important it was to do it. And I also knew we had some real hurdles to get over.

I had become chairman of another subcommittee of the Civil Service and Post Office committee, but I stayed hard with regard to the District Committee. I made my decision from a strategy standpoint that the only way I could get this done is if I could keep it in the District Committee. There was some pressure

on at the time. I'm not good at remembering all these names now, but the chairman of the Public Works Committee and some guys there were very anxious to get jurisdiction over this project. I had some long discussions with them, and had friends on that committee that were in my class and so forth. I said, you know, the pressure on them was to have enough money for UMTA and all these other projects. I've got a way to take a great demand out. You know the Nation's Capital is going to have more of a demand than Des Moines or St. Louis even. I won that argument. The long and short of it was that they agreed, finally, that the District Committee could keep jurisdiction. They'd had original jurisdiction. I was pretty pleased about that.

Number two, I got it into the subcommittee with Pete Stark, who is a neat guy. From San Francisco, though. Then working closely with Metro [I] developed the legislation. I'm not sure how seriously the administration took my efforts. You have to understand that I'm not a congressman with a great deal of seniority at the time, though as I indicated before, I know something about

congressional procedures, and I had the advantage over quite a few of them because I did.

Schrag: From your private practice?

Harris: Yes indeed. It seems, sometimes, the moves you make seem simplistic, but they are very important. I got it established as to the jurisdiction of the committee. I then got the committee established for it, having a California guy with me who had a number of other things on his mind at the time. He was on Ways and Means also, as you know. Pete became very imbued with the whole quest. As we got it reported out, we had it about the way we wanted it. Even with, as I recall, I got some operating subsidies into the original bill.

But the administration—I will tell you this. After Carter was elected, and before he was inaugurated, he had a group of us congressmen down to the Blair House for a meeting with Mondale and what have you. A fairly informal thing. Mondale talked, and he talked, and what have you. He says, are there any questions? Well, I probably strike you as a rather subtle guy, [laughs] but I was standing right in front of him, and I said, Mr. President, will you

support a full 103 mile Metro system for the Nation's Capital? Jimmy looked at me, and he says, well, Herb, remind me, how well did I do in your district? [laughs] He apologized afterward, but I said not at all. Ford had carried my district, of course. But that was then, and as you know, they had gotten into the big budget crunch.

I figured on bringing it out to the floor. I began working with the different folks over there. As I say, I knew some of them. I came up with the idea of bringing it out on District Day. There is a special—I don't know if they still have District Day or not, they probably don't. But at the time they had a special day set up for District Day, with special rules. I didn't have to worry about the Rules Committee, that kind of business. So I utilized that. Unfortunately it came—I don't want to give you the details—it came on the day of the congressional golfing day. [laughter] So I had to get District Day postponed by one week.

This happened on the floor, of course. Bobby Bowman, who was a congressman from the Eastern Shore of some checkered history was at the time the Republican who stood on the floor and opposed me. He opposed the

change in District Day for no other reason [except] he just didn't know what I was up to. Ron Dellums—good congressman—was chairman of the District Committee at that point. I said, OK, Ron, somebody has got to get Bowman to get that objection off. I said, that's your deal. You go over and talk to him. There were some funny angles on the whole thing, but he did it and convinced him. I remember to this day Ron walking across the well of the House.

Schrag: Thumbs up!

Harris: We had District Day changed and brought the vote up. I had worked a number of things on there in a workmanlike way. If you're sincere about legislation, you don't just give big, bold speeches. You work on how to move it. Because of this District Day thing, I think I blindsided the White House. It was not until Friday—District Day was going to be on Monday—and it was not until Friday that Herkey and company discovered what was coming up on Monday. Some of the stories I can't tell you. This is when they called Giaimo and others trying to organize a defense, an opposition. I had buttoned up a few of them at that point. And the overall, I think, appeal

of Metro shouldn't be underrated. And when it came to a vote, the fervor of opposition just wasn't there. I had enough that we got it passed, and it was a great day.

So, you got it past the House. So what are you going to do now? Herkey Harris called me up, and he says, Herb I want to hand it to you: you took me. You took me. But, he says, I want to tell you something: I'm going to get you in the Senate. I said, Herkey, make sure you try, OK? So I get over there and start talking, to Mathias, and others, of course. The legislation is going to go—is this too much?

Schrag: No, this is wonderful! Wonderful!

Harris: This is going to go the transportation subcommittee.

The chairman of the transportation subcommittee—

Schrag: Of the District Committee?

Harris: No. Oh, no. You're over in the Senate now. This has got to go to the— I forget the structure. They had the whole transportation committee, and they had a subcommittee for mass transit, I guess, or something like that. Lo and behold, it's Tom Eagleton that's chairman. I said, any chance of talking to you, Tom? He said, yes, I'll talk to you about one thing, he

said. He says, I just had an application to UMTA for \$200 million for mass transit in St. Louis rejected. Now he says, I've got a hard time explaining that in St. Louis. But, he says, how do I explain it if I then go ahead and propose giving a billion, eight hundred million to Washington? That's not good politics. I said you're right, you're right. I said, would you do this much, would you let it come to a vote in your subcommittee, and see what happens? Obviously you're going to vote against it, but, I said, you can be for truth and goodness, and at the same time understand your political problems. And that's what he did. I got the votes in the subcommittee. It came out on the floor. If you look at the record, Eagleton would not manage it on the floor. He got Levin of Michigan to manage it. The part that I love the most was, and no one realizes how uncommon this is, but the Senators invited me to come on the floor during the debate. Mathias had me sit in his chair, during the debate, because I knew the structure. It's funny, for someone who knew it as, and had been around it as much as I, I probably cherish it more, and am in more of awe. With all its warts and fallacies, it's

a remarkable institution, both the House and the Senate. House more so. But it passed.

And then the question was, would the president sign it?

[takes down framed photograph]

Schrag: This is you and President Carter at the signing ceremony.

Harris: He had just signed it. And as he signed it with the pen in his hand, and Gladys Spellman is right here, Joe Fisher is right here. Hechinger, and the guy who was Secretary of Transportation but also became Governor of Washington—

Schrag: Goldschmitt?

Harris: Yes, that sounds right. And so forth. Hechinger is there. Anyway. Jimmy was feeling it a bit, and Herkey was madder than hell, but they were in a position then where didn't want to veto legislation like that. He had signed it. And when he signed it, he turned and he said, I don't know who I should give this pen to? A great moment in my life. Gladys and the rest of the room yelled, Herb Harris. And so he did.

Schrag: So Carter was never convinced, just outflanked?

Would that be fair to say?

Harris: I'd hate to say anything real harsh about it. They were basically in a budget fight, and they didn't feel like they could afford this. No, there was any philosophical discussion. But he had a bill, and after the occasion I just described, they actually let me speak to the group. It was a good moment. So anyone who deprecates the knowledge and implementation of legislative procedure, they have an argument with me. Because I learned, when I was in a civic association, how slow and difficult, even, inefficient government could be, but I also learned how easy it could be to change it if you found out where the power points were. That's more than you asked.

Schrag: No, that's wonderful. This is very important, because really the previous big bills for Metro-'65, '69, even '71—they were all based on this idea that this wasn't going to cost a lot of money.

Harris: Yes.

Schrag: That oh yeah, we'll have a lot of bonds.

Harris: One point seven, or something like that.

Schrag: Even that. The thing will cost two billion dollars, or two and a half, but it will all be paid out of bonds, and we'll have this little bit of sugar on top that will be actual federal grant money, and even that may be paid back someday. It's only in '79 that the federal government says, OK, this is going to cost a lot of money and we're actually going to pay for it. So in some ways, it's one of the most remarkable pieces of legislation in Metro's history. Then, the other thing of course, was that the earlier bills were done with the firm support of Presidents—

Harris: Johnson—

Schrag: Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon. They were all behind this one hundred percent.

Harris: Yes. Yes.

Schrag: With this one you were swimming upstream against two presidents, and really Metro hasn't had much of a friend in the White House since Nixon left.

Harris: If you turn off your recorder, I'll tell you a precious thing.

Schrag: OK.

[break in recording]

Schrag: We're back on record now.

Harris: You've got to enjoy the process, you understand.

Schrag: Let me ask you this. In that whole—some of what you were doing was just getting around and under the White House. Through their legs, whatever, while they're not looking. Were you able to actually—were there people in Congress whose votes actually changed? That is, who were opposed to it in the beginning? While a lot of the opposition had come from the White House, Congress had sponsored its own studies that came back fairly negative about building the whole Metro. Were there people who you were able to talk to and say, look, actually I know you're opposed but here's why it's worth doing?

Harris: Just an awful lot of them. Just an awful lot of them. I don't know whether they changed or not. I tried not to act like a zealot. In Congress you talk pragmatic. And I think that at the time there were strong pragmatic arguments with regard to the transportation, and, at the time, with regard to our Nation's Capital. What we could do. We were really in transition there. And I had been with it for, at

that point, about 15 years. I guess, being fervent and strong believed helps in that sort of dialogue. You happen to sit down and have lunch with a guy, and he brings it up. I don't mean you start giving him chapter and verse, like I've been doing with you, but you do understand, or try to understand, where he's coming from, and where we should go. The advocacy has to involve more than just what's good and what's bad and what have you. Advocacy also, to the extent you can, has to relate to that guy's district. That's pretty simplistic, but that's the long and short of it.

Schrag: But that's the most bizarre part. For someone from Missouri or Minnesota or wherever, this is not the Apollo program where you can piece it out all over the country. This is something that's going to be built in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. So how do you get someone like that on board?

Harris: I don't know. But understand, it's awful important for the first things you do to be right. And remember, the first thing I did was put it into a context where it didn't take any money away from their district. That was, I think, very essential.

If it had gotten, at that point, into UMTA, I think we, I know we would, still be working on the tunnel. That was an important help. And the other help was it was just right. And remember this. I had a pretty darn good Congress to work with. We were elected in '74, the Watergate context. There was quite a group, probably 75 Democratic congressmen, freshmen. I was very active in that class. Because I was a part of them, but also more experienced, and what have you. I knew how to communicate, I feel, with them. I would be surprised if anybody in that class would voted against me on that.

Schrag: Interesting. So that's almost a substitute seniority being within that class?

Harris: Absolutely. Absolutely We had done some revolutionary things. We created all these subcommittees that they're still trying to crawl out from under, I guess. But I was never in Congress when I wasn't chairman of a subcommittee. [laughs] Which in historical terms, I guess, was just incredible. Dick Bolling, God love him, whom I had known for a long time, a remarkable legislator. I remember, one time I hadn't gone along with the

leadership on a vote, and Dick was talking to me on the floor about it. I said, Dick, you know, a lot of times us young congressmen just don't understand the nuances and what have you, and we vote wrong, and because of convictions that may be wrong. And a lot of times us young congressman just get mixed up like that. And Dick looked at me, and said Herb, you may be a new congressman, but you ain't a young one.

[laughs]

That class was a remarkable class, in my opinion. A lot of good guys, and basically from non-Democratic-solid districts. This is not guys that came up through the courthouse and the machines. An awful lot of these guys were outsiders that came in with a lot of fervor of doing good. And a lot have. Max Baucus, Chris Dodd. A lot of them stayed with it for a good long while.

Schrag: Among your allies, it seems to me the strangest one was Ayatollah Khomeini, who gave you some gas lines right when you were bringing up the bill, so suddenly a coal-fired rapid transit system started looking pretty good? Would I be wrong to attribute some of your success to the energy crisis?

Harris: It may have been. I think it was tangential. I think there was an overall rethinking of transportation, just like there was with regard to energy. We started doing a lot of talking about alternate sources of energy. I think there was an overall national policy thing. Maybe it was more important than I think, because I was looking at a bunch of trees. It was helpful, but it wasn't that significant.

Schrag: I think those are my questions about Stark-Harris. Maybe we should go back—

Harris: Go on back.

Schrag: —to the early '60s again. So, you knew Stolzenbach in the Interfederation Council.

Harris: That's where I first met him. They were still— I also, they had, I'm talking 1960, '61, again. Transit already had an office. I think Warren Quenstedt was deputy there, and I knew Warren from time goes by. I forget what they called that agency. They didn't call it WMATA.

Schrag: No, it was the NCTA. National Capital Transportation Agency.

Harris: There you are. Thank you.

Schrag: Stolzenbach, as I understand it, starts making noise in 1960, under the Eisenhower administration. They set up the agency.

Harris: Nineteen fifties.

Schrag: Fifty-nine, sixty.

Harris: OK.

Schrag: The agency is established with a sort of placeholder administrator in 1960. And Stolzenbach, as president of the Interfederation Council, is testifying, saying we can't do all these freeways, particularly the one up through Bethesda. He was, as I understand it, pretty anti-freeway already. Was that your impression?

Harris: Yes. Let me say something else. As you say that, [it] reminds me. They had come up with this mammoth plan for the District, and I have great fun telling people, as I point to different segments of it, they were Corps of Engineer types too.
[recording paused while Mr. Harris conferred with a colleague]

Schrag: We're resuming. You were talking about the Mass Transportation Survey plan of '58, '59, that proposed highways everywhere.

Harris: I realize now—you forget different factors—that had an impression on me, and I think it had an impression on other people too. At that point, I had been in the District and Virginia for a number of years, and knew the District. I came here in 1948 to go to law school, and my offices were at 13th and Penn. I always remember looking at that plan that was going to put a depressed freeway down E Street. People don't remember how ludicrous that thing was. This little segment over here—so many people, I get a kick out of asking them, do you realize why this is here? They say, it's funny you should ask, because they look at it, and say why is it here? And I say, well it was going to be a complete circle. And it was going to tunnel under the Lincoln Memorial, and the Tidal Basin, and so on and so forth. You looked at that, and as you said the Three Sisters Bridge, and you said, oh! The notion. With my strong feelings that another lane is not going to solve anything, if you can imagine trying to solve it this way. Detroit, I think, had done quite a bit of that sort of thing, and as you looked at what this would do, and has done, still has done to some metropolitan areas, I think that factor. And as you

know, God love him, Natcher, for whatever reason, was totally committed to achieving that. Unless that was built, Metro wasn't going to get any money. But people looking at what could happen was very helpful in saying hey, we've got to try something a little bit different here.

Schrag: Did you have any personal impressions of Stolzenbach? Some people seem to have thought him a fanatic. Other people thought that fanaticism was justified, given what he was up against.

Harris: I don't claim—I met with him and talked to him several times, but I don't claim to have know him real well. But, number one, in a cause like that, where we were—the whole highway program became Eisenhower's big accomplishment. Interstate highways. And the highway thing was going over; we were learning how to do things with highways. It took, if you will, a zealot to go out and preach the cause of mass transit. In a way it was revolutionary, and that sort of contribution, I think, was important, indeed, essential. So often after the revolution, governing is found to be more difficult. In achieving that transition, I'm sure

people would say, well, Stolzenbach didn't know how to compromise, or tried to draw the line too strong. Some of that may have been true, and I'm sure some of it was, but different people have different roles at different times. That's the way I interpret it.

Schrag: In the sixties, prior to your joining the Fairfax Board, how closely were you following the various schemes that Stolzenbach's agency was putting out? The bobtail system.

Harris: I had just a number of other things on my mind. I knew what was going on, and some of the people doing it would talk to me about it. I was interested in it as a thing, growing. But whether it should go here, or whether it should go there, I was really not that much a part of. From our area, that was probably a period when a fellow by the name of Fred Babson was very active. There were three. As I recall, too, the subcommittee of COG, or committee of COG, got quite active in pushing the interjurisdictional quest. At the time I used to say that I understood that Metro was supposed to be this technological marvel, but, I said, if it's a miracle, it's more of a political miracle, than a technological miracle. The notion

that you could get Maryland, Virginia, the federal government, and the District to come together on something—especially the two major jurisdictions in Maryland and the one, two, three, four, five jurisdictions in Fairfax, along with Arlington and Alexandria. You asked me at the beginning about the commission. This was, I was fervent that this would be, some the most important work I could do. Maybe not as important as getting the hospital, but I did seek and go on the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. I could have done other things. I had the votes on the board, at the time, and I could have used them in different ways. But I felt like this was something I wanted very much. Fred had been elected chairman of board in 1967, and he had been, and wanted to stay as, member of WMATA. But I recognized the role of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission as being an important role politically to get the whole thing come together. I wanted to get closer to it than that. So when Fred resigned I sought [his seat]. There was an alternate. I think Joe Alexander was alternate at the time. You've done this, huh?

Schrag: I talked to Mr. Alexander about two weeks ago. So I had to look up all of his bios. Mr. Babson, he died about a year and a half ago.

Harris: That was a real shame. Joe was alternate. So to become principal I had to hopscotch a little bit. But I had the votes and became, and he stayed on as alternate. In typical Joe Alexander mode he did not have a hard time adjusting to that fact at all. I don't know whether he told you this story. He's fond of telling the story about how we got the second crossing.

Schrag: He gave me his version, but tell me yours.

Harris: There's only one version. The one thing I wanted to do—I was representing, my board seat, and my congressional seat, of course, was Alexandria and the southern part of the county. I wanted to make sure that the servicing of that area was adequate. Fred had been more interested in getting a line running up Columbia Pike, because of those reasons. I started out very strong about the second crossing, but in the process I made sure the studies were done as to locating the proper site for the Huntington station. If you want to know why it is where it is.

We acquired that site, I think the records support me on this, in 1970. That station was not built until, what?

Schrag: It was opened in the early eighties, I think. Or mid-eighties.

Harris: I remember the opening. But I wanted to anchor the thing, and so we did. I was very pleased to have a picture of what that 60 acre site looked like when we got Metro to do the advance acquisition on thing, which is something I preached as to how much money we could save. When people realize the station is going to be there, and sometimes there's a little delay before its opening, land values would go through the ceiling. We got that acreage for a remarkable bargain. And just as important, as I say, it anchored the fact that a line was coming out there. That is really what happened to the Columbia Pike line and so forth. I wasn't opposed to that, but it had to be added.

Schrag: When you came on the board, then, you would have had the proposed system from Airlie House in front of you, but you still saw an opportunity, obviously, to tweak it a little bit?

Harris: You betcha. The single crossing. I wanted that second crossing and started right there. We had remarkable discussions on the thing. The engineers came back, and Jackson came back, a couple or three times. You may get the impression that I can be sort of willful about this sort of thing [laughs]. I said, no, we're going to have a second crossing. Everybody who wants to come out my way is not going to go clear down to Foggy Bottom, go over to Rosslyn, and then come back. It just doesn't make sense. Sure, that sounds pragmatic, and it was. But as I looked at it and studied it, I had strong convictions that that was the truth. That you're going to go over—that the line had to go to National Airport. That was absolutely essential. That it was going to serve the Pentagon. And the notion that the only way you did that by this circuitous route didn't make sense. It was probably not a totally objective decision on my part, but anyway, I had myself convinced. As they talked about it and said—Jackson had the engineers sit down and say look, Herb. This is the problem. This is where we are as far as L'Enfant Plaza is concerned. This is where it comes in. We are too low at that point to do a

bridge and we are too high, at that point, to do a tunnel and portal at the proper time. So there's just no way we can put it in there. He handed me a map, and I took a ballpoint pen I just put in right here. I drew two lines next to the railroad bridge. They went round and round on this thing. I said, guys, I'm not going to give up on this. I'll never forget the look on Jackson's face when he came back and said, we figured out a way to do it. And I don't have any claim to engineering knowledge on this, but that's when they came up with the trench idea, the steel tubes, which they brought up from Norfolk, a paddleboat away, and put them in. And I was just right pleased about that.

Schrag: So was it the engineers who needed to be convinced, or did you have to do some horse trading with Maryland and DC as well?

Harris: I don't remember. I think we were still, pretty much— Well, there was Arlington, who knew Rosslyn station's importance. There were others. I don't recall as far as budgeting goes. A lot of the line was still in gestation. I apologize because I can't slot it exactly in the time period. We were going to

run the line all the way out to Burke, and, as a matter of a fact, when they did the widening of what they now call the mixing bowl at Springfield, that bridge and underpass-overpass was made big enough, when they did that, so that we could send the line to Burke. I've always been disappointed that it didn't go down there as well as Springfield. And also when they widened the Beltway they put the pier in between the Beltway, so that when the Metro did come out there, it had the support, the pier, right there ready for it to go over to get to Huntington. Which was kind of proud of too, because of the amount of money that saved as far as having to tear up the Beltway again. But I don't remember having to bargain with Prince George's and Montgomery that much. I was very much in support of some the things they were talking about doing. Kind of worked with them closely on projects. Go out to some of there public hearings, that sort of business. There were some good guys on there. Gleason was off at the time. Gleason and Babson were quite a pair; I think there was a lot of fighting going on there.

Schrag: Oh, really?

Harris: Yes. About this, that, or the other thing. But the second crossing, was basically because it was going to cost more money, and presented Jackson Graham with that problem. He was trying to contain it, and he figured that as a fairly expensive operation, per mile, per foot. And it was true, they had gotten hung up on fact of the no bridge, no tunnel thing. When I mention the tunnel, let me tell you. The first time the tunnel broke through here at Foggy Bottom, I had one or two of my sons with me. We did a walkthrough, pretty muddy. The television reporters were with us. As we got to the center of the tunnel, some wag had put a sign up saying, entering Virginia. The television guys said, get on over there and let us take a picture of you with the sign. So I did. One of the guys says, come on, say something. I said, I will note that for the first time in the history of the Commonwealth, a Virginia politician is 300 feet below the Potomac and still talking. [laughter]

But it was. It was a neat feeling. To walk from that angle into the excavated Rosslyn station was absolutely awesome. I didn't realize how much of a rock cliff that was. It reminded me of walking into

Carlsbad Caverns or something like that. The expanse of what they had to do, as far as cutting out of rocks. As you know, at the time, they had worked like hell to come up with the escalators. At that time, it was, I think, the longest escalator they had to deal with. I guess subsequently they may have passed it. That may have had an influence on the second crossing, because when they got down that low, with the grade requirement, they couldn't get up higher, so they had to come into Rosslyn very low. That became very expensive. That may have been one of the factors that was prejudicing them against my plan. I didn't know I remembered all this.

Schrag: This is great stuff. It seems to me that the—

Harris: Before I forget it. The one thing I wanted to make sure to tell you, especially as to Jackson Graham and the whole Corps of Engineers philosophy. I didn't realize it at the time, although I started to. Whenever you'd get into one of these arguments as to should it go there, or should it go there, I think he invented it out of whole cloth, but it's something called the knock-out panel. For example, I remember the station as you get over to the

Pentagon, whether you go up Columbia Pike. We'd talk, and you know, this isn't the final Metro. Jackson would say, we'll go this way, but we'll put in a knock-out panel. I'm not sure any of us knew what a knock-out panel was. And I'm not sure he did. [laughs] But if you go through the whole regime of the thing, and the history, I think we have more knock-out panels—

Schrag: To smooth over some of the differences.

Harris: The brilliance of saying, hey, we're not going to do it now, but we're going to fix it so it can be done in the future. Which was good.

Schrag: In terms of the routing. It seems to me that where Fairfax dropped the ball was not so much on the Huntington line, as on the Orange line. Fairfax builds Tysons Corner, the ninth-largest downtown in America, in one place, then puts the Orange line out to another place, where it then downzones all the land around Vienna, so the mini-city that all the consultants wanted couldn't be built. I know this wasn't your district, but do you have any comments on that?

Harris: I'm not sure. A lot of times you can add 2 and 2 and get 22. The Orange Line was designed very early.

Some of those basic lines were. I think Orange Line was basically reaching toward Fairfax City, because Fairfax City was a political element in the whole thing, number one. Number two, if you're looking at the time of design, and what Tysons Corner was then, and what Tysons Corner is now, there is, I think, a great big difference. I'm not sure a lot of folks in that current politics understood. I knew the guy who did the Westgate Industrial Park, Jerry Halpin. He started that in the 50s, 60s. He was a real pioneer; that was a dairy farm. I used to drive over there quite a bit, but I never realized what great ideas they had.

[recording paused while Mr. Harris conferred with a colleague]

I'm trying to place myself as to what I was thinking and what I saw being thought about. The Orange Line, I did not have that much to do with placing. I wasn't in the business of revolution. I knew what I wanted. The business of placing it in the median, so much of it in the median, at the time I had second thoughts about. The access and egress. The whole

notion that this is the proper location. I loved the railroad rights-of-way. That's why I was very much in favor of Burke, and felt that we could do it to Springfield Station. Quite frankly, I later came up with the strong feeling that it should go on down to Lorton, with the argument of using railroad right-of-way to do it and the idea of picking up the Prince William traffic before it got on the highways. But there was a basic problem there. When they then started curtailing it, so it didn't get close to Fairfax City, it started losing much of its glamour. But, quite frankly, so much was committed at that point, there wasn't much to do about it. What was the argument was what could you about Dulles. Here again, strong proposals were being made that it ought to be extended to Dulles, but the financing wasn't there, and the alternative of trying to do major surgery to the Orange Line wasn't there. They are still talking about putting the line over from Falls Church to Dulles. Periodically there's someone who's very much for it.

Schrag: Why don't we call it a day there, and I'll stop the recording.

[end of session]

Session 2. 13 March 2001

Schrag: Zachary Schrag is interviewing Mr. Herbert Harris.

It is Tuesday, March 13, 2001, at a quarter to three in the afternoon. We are in his office in the Watergate, in Washington, D.C., and this is our second interview session. When we finished last time, we were just talking a bit about Tysons Corner. Reflecting on that, it seems to me that in Fairfax, a very big place geographically, it's hard enough to look after your own district. What happened was that you and Joe Alexander were really looking after the interests of the southern part of the county, Babson was looking after the interests of the Columbia Pike corridor. Was there anyone who was, or should have been, paying attention to the I-66 and Dulles Highway corridors?

Harris: I think so. There was considerable input by very competent guys on the Board of Supervisors there, and on the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. One of the more active, and intelligent, was Rufus Phillips, who was then Dranesville District. As the board developed, Jim, from

Providence District, whom I knew well, was also there.

Schrag: Who was that?

Harris: I forget his last name. He represented Providence District on the Board of Supervisors. I'm embarrassed because I know him well. That sort of input was made at the Commission level. As I say, the question never really became whether to abandon. The I-66 location was established very early in the process, as I recall. I never remember a serious discussion of trying to take that out and put it in. There may have been some. There were discussions about adding Dulles lines and that sort of thing. But, I think, as I indicated before, as it was viewed then, apparently from the beginning, access to Vienna and Fairfax was seen to be the more important. It's hard to recall exactly on that, but Tyson's was not, as I indicated to you before, it was simply not looming with that importance. If I may, the important point here was, and always has been—I was thinking here today again about it—was what I pushed for as soon as I got my bill through. The notion to start planning for additional routes.

The notion that hey, we're here, and that's the end of it, seemed to me to be very shortsighted. I think that access to Tyson's, to the airport, to Dulles were good examples. And there were also good examples, as I tried to look over into Maryland too, to try to start looking at extended systems. I think Tyson's was the victim of a failure to start looking ahead the minute you started finishing this line. My sermon back then was, because I realized how long we had to talk about the 103-mile system before it actually got going. I realized the planning and the competition for the capital for the extensions and improvements was keen. It was important to get going on it. The biggest failure, as I see it, is the fact that we didn't do it. I think I mentioned in our last interview. We ought to be planning that line on down to Burke, and certainly down to Lorton right now. The notion, now, of picking up the Dale City, Prince William, demand, before it gets into the mixing bowl, is so clear and so obvious. It's just a shame. And in both cases, we had railroad right-of-way to work with on that.

Schrag: Within Fairfax, Fairfax is also notable because that's where some of the most-opposition to Metro

comes out. I'm thinking particularly of Jack Herrity, whom you ran against in one Congressional election.

Harris: He ran against me.

Schrag: Excuse me, he ran against you. And started eating some crow when it came to Metro. But he was really quite fierce about it. And the other source of opposition I've noticed is the *Northern Virginia Sun* becomes an editorial voice very critical of Metro. I wonder if you can explain, as you understood it, why they became so hostile.

Harris: I don't know. I really don't recall. The *Sun* usually was a very locally oriented paper, and supportive of things. I think it was hard for a lot of folks then to see over that wall that we were talking about before of yeah, it's going to be expensive. Now you're realizing that it is expensive. But this is a point where you've got to show some foresight and make the investment. I'll be blunt with you on this. I think that Jack Herrity's position was arrived at politically because the developer interest, strange to say, was more oriented toward highway than it was toward better transportation for the already

developed. The old second crossing of the Potomac was still being debated. The notion of putting the highway up from 95—I'm trying to remember what number that is—so they could access better development with that sort of highway access. This is where those interests were. They were expressed to me a number of times. I felt that highways would not be the long time solution. We had to gut up and put this initial capital, a large amount of this initial capital, into Metro, a light rail system.

Schrag: Did you have trouble persuading the developers that Metro could be good for them too?

Harris: It was funny. It's an awfully good question. Yes, I did. Some of them, the more reasonable among them would look and say, I guess it's all right. I would actually get into the business of saying, gee, just in my mind's eye the potential for development around some of these sites—which is now being talked about so much—is so obvious. You'd look at the Huntington Station there and you'd say, you could almost see the Monticello apartments being built. And the impact it would have on the King Street Station seemed to be so obvious. I'm sure there must

have been some developers that realized this, but the developers then, as a group, seemed to be more oriented toward suburban sprawl, than they were toward gosh, we can intensify development with modern transportation systems. That was basically what you were pushing on. There was nothing like going out and finding yourself 500 acres and seeing if you couldn't get as many 300 or 400 thousand dollar houses on it as possible. Which now is the infill. They start talking about the million-dollar house. But in my opinion, that is what I heard mostly from the developers.

Schrag: Part of what happens, while you're on the board, still, is you adopt the PLUS program. I guess it's you, and Phillips, and who else was in that managed-growth coalition? Was Audrey Moore an ally?

Harris: Certainly Alan Magazine was. Certainly Audrey should have been. But my raw reflection, for whatever it means, she was more interested in ostensibly stopping growth than she was in managing it. This would manifest itself in strange ways. We were dealing with serious—in my opinion, you're getting away from transportation a little bit—sewer problems

in the county. It was just absolutely scandalous the amount of growth that had been authorized, through zoning, without adequate, or even near-adequate, planning for sewer capacity and operations. At the same time, as you would note, this was when people like me, for planned growth, were given the opportunity of the recognition that something had to be done as far as the Potomac was concerned. Something had to be done in the whole runoff situation, of a dramatic nature. I used to kid that I didn't know what effluent was until I got on the board, which was not a double entendre at all. In that, those like Rufus and others—I was down county. I was downhill from the rest of the county, and I was interested in sewer plans. I swore I was going to crawl through every sewer pipe in the Mt. Vernon District, and I almost did it at one time. They had these series of little sewer plants. Doeg Creek, Little Hunting Creek. There was one, right there at, we called it Westgate, but it was right above Belle Haven. I was intent on getting those. They would be lucky if they were getting 50 or 60 BOD removal. I was just giving you an example. In the process, I tried to modernize the whole sewer plant capacity.

That's where the lower Potomac came from. I don't know if you're familiar with any of that.

Schrag: A little.

Harris: You would get from Audrey and some of her friends opposition to modernizing the sewer capacity, because that would give them less of a club to stop development. I would say no, this is not rational or constructive, to think that you can stop development by making your sewers function poorly. [laughs] But that was basically what the argument was. Often times, I would work out a compromise, and I think magnificent progress was made in that area. I get prideful every time I drive down the Potomac, every day. Every time I look out there and see a heron standing there, or, in the evening, seeing people fish. I say, son of a gun. If you can imagine what that river was like when we started, in the late sixties, on this. When I worked out a compromise I'd often go out and take the opposition of folks who would say, why would you make a compromise in order to get the sewer development, because that just allows more growth? That was really what the fundamental debate was about.

There was a wonderful woman who became chairman of the board, Jean Packard, who was very much an environmentalist also. But Jean was constructive. As the board chairmanship changed, she became a positive influence on the planned growth thing, too, as distinguished from Audrey. Jean always kidded me. It was before she was on the board with, I forget, there were some people who were giving me heck because I had worked out in the board, and I think I knew how to do this. Gradually working out a compromise to get to the goal you are after, which is to clean up the doggone Potomac and not allow growth to manifest itself quicker than the sewer capacity. Jean always quoted me, back when I came out to talk to them, and they started giving me heck. I said, I know what you wanted me to do. You want me to go down with all flags flying, and take defeat, and let them do what they wanted to. Jean always remembered that. She said, that was the first lesson that I got, that you work at getting close to your goal. You don't go down with all flags flying. That format is really what we were going at. I don't know why Audrey— My recollection, and I have to tell you, it's very broad, was that she was not

supportive. I remember her and Herrity being more in league with the transportation thing, as far as financing goes. Part of it, of course, was that she was representing Annandale District, and probably didn't see the direct benefit to Annandale. You're asking me to test my memory on a lot of stuff here.

Schrag: I guess the big picture question I'm trying to get at is the big policy question today: is rapid transit enough of a force to fight sprawl or are we just stuck with it?

Harris: Stuck with sprawl?

Schrag: Stuck with sprawl. Some scholars look at Montgomery County and say, gee, they've really concentrated a lot of their development in these corridors. Both with I-270 and the Red Line, and over in Silver Spring. Maybe this is a positive example. Then they look at Fairfax and say, the development is in one place and the rail line in another. If you go around, it's a very automobile-oriented landscape. Whatever pride you have—you have pride in the Potomac, I don't know how you feel when you drive around Fairfax. Whether there is anything you could have done to make the land a little more compactly

developed. So I just wonder if you have any comments on whether there were big mistakes made, or whether Fairfax has made a reasonable return on the opportunity that Metro had, or whether we should give it all up and hope for cleaner-burning cars and slightly smaller SUVs?

Harris: It's hard to know. It may all go back to the defense funds that were used to build Shirley Highway. And the expansion of it. The impact, I would suggest, on Fairfax was positive. But there should have been more. There are so many elements, and it's crazy in my view, to say rapid transit will solve it all if you have the transportation there. You still have some great cultural desires for the backyard. One of my other great interests was park development. And the development we achieved in putting as much land in Fairfax into parkland. I love driving people around the district and showing them some very large parks that we got into the system. That helps. The ultimate goal, of having everyone live in high-rises and travel rapid rail, is not the view that today's or yesterday's parents were looking at. You have to deal with it, unfortunately, on this principle, that principle, basis. The first time I saw the London

system and learned that into London about 95 percent came in on rapid transit or buses, mass transit, and about five percent by automobile, you say, well, Europe has a great advantage over us, because the original developments of the inner-city didn't permit accommodation to the automobile. We probably didn't either, but we acted like we could, as I was talking to the last time about inner beltways and so forth. More should have been done in rapid transit. But would that have prevented folks from commuting Culpeper and Fredericksburg today? No. Could we have worked out—I had a concept in my mind at one time, the big advantage that London had was the train stations that almost surrounded it, coming in. What I felt strongly about was that when you're looking at the Orange Line, the Fairfax line, the Vienna line, down to Lorton with spokes going out like that, was really where we were, and what we had to work on. The notion that you could keep that all pastoral, and concentrated the development, more, I just don't think that's where we were at the time. Fairfax was growing at that time, as I recall, by about 35,000 per year.

Schrag: Extraordinary. The *Post* is doing a series this week on the rapid growth, and also the income growth. It's now the richest jurisdiction in the country. And it's hard to know—I think I want to say, and I know that I've pressed you on this point—that it was possible either to move the line to Tyson's or to have more development at Vienna. There were proposals. Til Hazel was behind it. Thanks to the opposition of people in Vienna and Fairfax City, that area was actually downzoned. But in the big picture, it's hard to really imagine a transformed Fairfax County, as you say, with everyone living in high-rises, when reason people go there is to get the land.

Harris: Here again, it means accommodation, of trying to do both. But the development in Tysons is private enterprise development. I did want to add this to the mix. I mentioned sewers, and I mentioned parks, and alluded only tangentially to the fact that the politics become very difficult. Frankly, it wasn't as difficult for me, because they knew where I was, and they didn't bother me that much. [laughs] But the amount of effort that, give him his due, that Til Hazel and others did, to achieve intensive

development in the nature of the subdivision was very strong and very concentrated. Prince William has seen that to a fare thee well also. I would say my planned growth crowd made some progress, but it was very hard to make as much as we should have made. But you can't blame it all on mass transit. More of it would have helped. Thank God we got what we did, when we did. We should have kept up.

Schrag: So you think the success of the planned growth coalition was to get those parks, and to get that sewer treatment, so that at least there's some environmental consideration amid all these—

Harris: That, and trying to come up with standards to prevent massive, and intensive, zonings as went out. Trying to put some rationality into the growth process, instead of just letting it grow like Topsy. We went through a period where the demand was there, no question about it. I would say development as a whole was better for those efforts. I think there should have been more of them.

Schrag: I want you to switch hats from being a Fairfax Supervisor to being a WMATA board member. Of course you were both at the same time. But on your week as a

WMATA board member. You joined when Natcher was still a pretty big threat. I came across the minutes of the morning that Giaimo's amendment was going to be voted on in the House. A few hours later—

Harris: For Metro?

Schrag: Yes. December 2, 1971. This was the day, that you know Giaimo is about to take it. You say that Fairfax was about ready to withdraw from the compact. Did you think that? Did you think that the compact was about to fall apart because of Natcher? Do you have any recollections of just the emotions of that period?

Harris: It sounds a little pragmatic on my part. I'd have to recollect exactly what I was trying to achieve. No. I don't think—Fairfax's withdrawal would have been over my dead body. On the other hand, I had to make clear to my colleagues and others that the system—The remarkable achievement, and the thing that I had to argue about, was when is Fairfax going to get any service? Sure, Arlington is in, what did we call it, Zero? It was part of the basic.

Schrag: The basic system, with the spur to the Pentagon and Pentagon City.

Harris: The way it was constructed. This was the thing that I was fighting at the time. What I wanted to see put on, was the effort to go on—as I should, representing Fairfax—was to get it out so it was of service to Fairfax. The remarkable, as I told you before, political accomplishment of having everybody contribute, Fairfax County especially, to a system that wasn't going to reach them for a number of years, was not an easy political accomplishment. But I think it was the most important factor. This is what I referred to, really, when I talked of the political miracle of getting it.

Schrag: Is getting that money up front. It sort of locks you all in a room together.

Harris: So different. Out in San Francisco, I remember going around there, where localities built there own stations. You had a situation there at one time, where you had one, maybe two or three, stations sitting there, and the lines weren't going to get to them. And they were finished.

Schrag: I want to talk about the bus takeover some, because I know you were involved with that. One of the debates was between you and Jackson Graham over

whether WMATA would run the buses or whether you would have a contract management system. Do you recall this at all?

Harris: Whether we what?

Schrag: It seems to me that the bus takeover must have been very traumatic for the authority. You have all these—Graham and the Corps of Engineers guys who wanted to build things.

Harris: That's absolutely right.

Schrag: You have a financial plan based on having shiny new trains charging fairly high fares that would be indexed to inflation. You didn't have any labor relations issues in terms of operators, because you weren't running a system. Then almost overnight—though you could have seen it coming, but almost overnight—you're stuck with rusting, cruddy buses, a lot of very poisonous labor relations, certainly with the D.C. Transit folks, and you're hiring both management—

Harris: After Chalk, yes.

Schrag: And then on top of that, you have, particularly in D.C., a large constituency of riders, who think the bus fares are already too high and want them

lowered. The D.C. council is sympathetic to that. Whereas in the suburbs, suddenly people like Herrity are saying, why is Fairfax going to be subsidizing bus riders in D.C.? This is going to be a big money pit. This could not have been fun for anyone. On the other hand, it also seemed to be absolutely necessary if there were to be any feeder buses to the stations.

Harris: Of course, of course. You've done some studying on this. That's great; I admire that. I, at times, have gotten drawn into the details of this as I had on other things, where I really didn't feel—I felt my job was more macro. As you maybe can tell from our talks, there were certain general principles where you had to add the whole thing up and say, hey, this is what you have to do if you're going to have a chance at success. The number one thing, and my political miracle thing, was a regional approach. So fundamental, but at least if you use that as a point of tether, of how all that works together, that's one thing. The second thing was we all—I talked about it so much, and quite frankly was, I guess, wrong, most of the time on it. I felt strongly that once you got somebody in their car, it was hard as

heck to get them out of it. We had to come up with a bus system that was designed to service everybody, but also would serve as the basis of having a feeder bus system to as many stations as possible. In order to do that, you had to do the regional planning thing. It's probably a good thing that I didn't realize all the difficulties that was going to go into taking over the buses. I'm fond of saying that the only good things I've done in my life was when I didn't realize what I was getting into. But it was just the solid principle. I'd ridden buses, I was familiar with the AB&W and even the WM&A. Those were the orange buses that went up there. At one time, I even had ridden on WM&A. I was very familiar with the District system, the streetcars and the buses there, when I was going to law school. My picture was the notion that you had to do that. The more you tried to negotiate out interrelationships, and one system serving the other system, and the idea that you give up your long, regional bus lines in order to design it more toward feeding the system. How well it was going to work, how well it did work, someone else is going to have to judge. But that was

basically what I was coming off of. What was I arguing with Graham about?

Schrag: The argument there was whether there should be contract management. There were companies in other cities that would take a fixed fee or percentage from the municipality, then run the buses, hire the operators, and repair the buses, buy them, all the rest. Indeed, in the original WMATA compact, the idea was that the rail system here was going to be run that way. That WMATA would own the rail, but someone else would actually run it, the way that New York City –

Harris: Yes, that convinced me. Go ahead.

Schrag: It's a little strange that Graham would have wanted WMATA to do it in-house, in that he wasn't really eager to be operating anything, and conveniently retired before he had to run a train.

Harris: As you know, he had one artificial heart valve. A remarkably vigorous guy, who I argued with a whole lot. He and I kind of came out of different spheres. But in the end, I admired him.

When we'd have the meeting on Thursday morning, and I was trying to run a practice in Washington at the

time, I was on the Board of Supervisors, and so on and so forth. We'd finish the meeting up maybe about one o'clock, and I'd try to cumshaw a ride from there over to my office. They had a couple cars there and this one guy—I can think of his name if I work hard enough—used to drive me over to my office. It was just a matter of a few blocks. I said, how long have you been with Metro? He said, I've been here about six or seven years. I said, have you had the same job? He said, no, my job changed about two years ago, when they made me a clerk. A filing clerk or something. I said, a filing clerk? I thought you mostly drove folks around. He said, well, yes, as a matter of fact, after they gave me my new job description, I kept on doing the same thing. I could just picture Jackson Graham working out a deal where he could go up on the Hill and say we don't have any chauffeurs. [laughter]

As you may know, he came to work on a motorcycle, mostly. If you'd go down to the basement of the new building, he had no parking space, which was kind of funny. I could hear what he was saying about that too: I believe in mass transit, and I don't have a parking space.

But I don't know. I was for or against contracting out?

Schrag: You were for; he was against it. Just one of the reasons I picked that out was what you said to the *Post*. You were for contracts; he was against it. "No question the fight was between Jackson Graham and me. I didn't stand a chance."

Harris: [laughs]

Schrag: Obviously, you were able to face him down over the second crossing, but when I look at that period after Natcher's defeat— when Natcher is in there, Graham is in some ways very helpless. He's unable to persuade Natcher. He's unable to persuade the D.C. Council to build the highways to release the funds. He's just sort of caught in between.

Harris: Yes.

Schrag: Once Natcher is down, '72, '73, '74, '75, it really seems to me that that is the Age of Jackson Graham.

Harris: In a sense it's my age too. I'm on that board during that period.

Schrag: So one of the questions I have for you is, what is the division of labor between him and the board? And

whatever you can tell me about his management style, because a lot of people have told me how much they admire him, and for whatever reason they don't think the system would have happened without him, but I'd like to get more specifics on that. I would also like to get a more rounded picture.

Harris: It's hard for me to evaluate. There is no question that Jackson kept control of things pretty well. He preferred a board that approved things, not that got too much into the operation. I mentioned to you before, he may have gotten some pretty good experience before with fellows like Babson and Gleason who wanted to get more into it. Babson would. His management style, with his backup of his general contractors, was to design questions to come before the board that were of a broad policy nature and not into the nitty-gritty of the operation. He had some on the board that didn't have, quite frankly, time or inclination to get into it too much. Basically, though, that board, and the way the thing was established, needed to challenge him on some of these, and needed him to know to that he was going to be challenged on some of these. But I have

to admit, quite frankly, that Jackson was running things.

Schrag: Did that hold true throughout the period, or did you feel that he began to lose his grip at some point? It seems to me that--this might have been as you were leaving, running for Congress in '74 and leaving in '75--these board committees start forming, around 1974. In an interview that Graham did, he said that he felt that was a big change. Once you have a board committee on a specific topic, that steps over into some of the more executive functions, rather than the broader policy functions.

Harris: I don't know. I think I can hear Jackson saying that, and I think I can understand why he's saying it. But my own feeling is that it didn't change things that much.

Schrag: If not the buses, do you recall any notable-- The second crossing was actually very interesting, where there is a case where if you lean on him hard enough he'll come up with a technical solution.

Harris: I had a lot of things on my side. Like good sense, was one of them.

Schrag: Can you recall any other notable instances of your dealings with Graham, either where things went very well or you got into conflict with him?

Harris: I really can't. I remember there were a lot of arguments. The design of the Metro car was the funny argument. The whole design of the system, in retrospect, was a very conservative thing. Probably from my point of view, the military aspects of Jackson's personality and the very bland design of the system were akin. But the more I saw it in long-term—I remember him saying, if you do that, you're just being faddish. I remember feeling that there should be a design on the car that would give us a horizontal line, and I forget where I had seen it. I started talking about golden windows instead of just the black. And the question of running that line between windows. I'm digging now, but I remember getting very much into that with Graham. It was another deal. He was very much, he identified himself very much with the design of the system: the cars, and the stations. Dead right on the stations. We came up with a deal where you have someone like me who will go down and see the painted cars in Mexico City, and see the other systems that start

using this, and wanting to ask the questions, why can't we use those nice, pneumatic wheels, and so on, and this is what I meant when I said he needed those kind of challenges. I wasn't about to be stubborn with him. I was going to go with it if I thought it was right. The one point I remember was, the main thing he wanted, I realized, when he was arguing against my design, the main thing he wanted was to get away from paint shops. I haven't thought about this in a long time. He said, do you realize how many paint shops you need, and how hard it is? I see that. But I said, I still think we should come up with that type of design along the windows, some way. Son of a gun. I forget exactly what happened, but he came back to the board, and to me, and said, okay, they have this stuff that we can put on, it's like a vinyl that will cement right on. He said, nothing will ever have to be done to it, no paint, but that gives you your line. That's just a little example where whatever it is. He'll go ahead and work on it. If there's no way to achieve it practically, he'd have come back a million times I'm sure.

Schrag: That's very helpful.

Harris: I think it's a good insight on him. I don't know whether they still use those vinyls on the cars.

Schrag: I think so. The car hasn't changed at all.

Harris: We got to arguing about the buses, too. I wanted the buses to—he came up with very conservative colors for the buses. It was kind of interesting. I said, I'd like the buses red, white, and blue. He came back with a design. Do they still have that red, white, and blue thing around the front of the bus?

Schrag: Yes.

Harris: That's what I came up with. Another example. He said, okay, I understood. Nation's Capital and so forth. But as we worked it out, he kept the—I remember that gray underneath of the bus too. I told you, I'm a macro man, not micro. I told you that, didn't I? [laughs] But he did that to achieve what he thought I was trying to do.

Schrag: What I heard from another interview subject was that he wanted it Army khaki down there, and it was the Navy men who said, maybe we should make it battleship gray.

Harris: [laughs] That's apocryphal, but that's all right. He had the folks going, and he would say to me, he had

about two or three examples. He said, you know, Herb, you did this, and you did that, and that paint design on the buses. You know, you've got a lot. Well, I didn't spent my time on the board to design the colors of buses. But that is really what he was doing. And that's how it got great.

Schrag: That sounds like a pretty healthy relationship, then. What I've heard about Graham a lot is that once a decision was made, he wanted the decision made quickly, and he wanted it to stick.

Harris: Yes.

Schrag: He thought indecision was the biggest threat to timely completion of the system.

Harris: He's right. And I felt that way too. This is where you can say, well, why do you that? Why do you do that? The momentum was the main thing. He understood that. And I understood what he was doing. I didn't agree all the time with it, but if it came to moving ahead, and giving up this, or giving up that, this is what you had to do to get it moving.

Schrag: So he would allow some flexibility. Whether the buses were blue, or red, or whatever, as long as you

decided he would live with that and charge on from there.

Harris: Almost that. As I said, there was an overall prejudice. He had some tastes. I don't know where it was all coming from. Obviously, they had spent a good deal of money at some point in time, with the delays and what have you, on the design of the stations, the design of various things. He had some very strong views as to what he wanted it to look like. I remember him saying, if you do that, it will be just faddish, just faddish. But it's like any other strong personalities, as far as I was concerned. I understood what he was doing. I wasn't afraid to challenge him. He never—I don't recall a period where we had any sort of long-term difficulties. I could tell you several other guys that I had, but I don't recall it with Jackson.

Schrag: Several others on the board?

Harris: Oh, no. Just in politics is all. Jack Herrity is a good example.

Schrag: Just a random question. I don't know if you remember anything about this, but since we were talking about the bus design, one thing that I never see any

discussion of is the decision to call them Metrobus, and then to tentatively rename the rail system Metrorail instead of just Metro. This was something that I don't know when it officially happened. Even a lot of Metro publications, they'll say Metro someplace and Metrorail another. Even today it's sort of a weird ambiguity about what the name of this rail system is.

Harris: I don't remember that being an issue. It is very possible, and probably likely, that I missed something on the thing. I do know that when we went ahead and made the giant step of taking over the bus system, it was distinguished. Metrorail and Metrobus became the terms. When it happened, I saw no particular significance.

Schrag: The one board debate that I did want to ask you about, because it really threatened this regional cooperation that you discussed, was the minority contracting issue. And minority hiring, but more minority contracting.

Harris: Yes.

Schrag: This really begins to show up as Natcher went down in late 1971. There's a committee formed on minority

hiring with you, and Sickles, and Moore, and Watt.

You are Virginia.

Harris: Moore?

Schrag: Jerry Moore.

Harris: Oh yes, in the District!

Schrag: And Graham Watt, also from the District. And then
Carlton Sickles from Maryland.

Harris: Graham Watt was the assistant mayor.

Schrag: Right. From what I understand, you were the Virginia voice on a lot these minority issues. Virginia being the way it, tax averse, conservative, people like Herrity out there, it's going to be the jurisdiction that is most concerned that money is being used to turn Metro into a social welfare program which is, I think, Herrity's term for it. When this climaxes later on, and Moore starts vetoing contracts, you get very angry. This is while you're running for Congress for the first time, and suddenly your project is being threatened by the District's insistence. This might have been the only time that anyone ever used this jurisdictional veto.

Harris: Is that right?

Schrag: I haven't come across other times.

Harris: And I did it?

Schrag: No, Moore did it.

Harris: Moore did it.

Schrag: Moore, and Sterling Tucker, and then Jack Nevius, who was reluctantly going along with them. The District said, we won't approve any contracts until you come up with a better affirmative action plan. So this is a real mess. And it really goes somewhat to the heart of what it means to do public investment. There are some basic philosophical issues about whether this is just another business that happens to be run by the government, or whether because it's a government program it needs to benefit those who need it the most. This is a really tough debate. I just want to know if you recall anything about it.

Harris: I do.

Schrag: How that was resolved.

Harris: Basically through my education. It comes off of what we were saying before. Of saying, hey, our job here is to get a Metro system built. I realize all this

other stuff that we do. As you probably know, and may not know, I was the first guy to sponsor an open housing ordinance in Fairfax County and won that ordinance with a 5-4 vote after a good deal of work. It sounds like ancient history, I know, but in '68 it was something. As I saw the different meanderings of the District government at the time, which had some excellent guys on it. Jerry Moore and I became very good friends.

Schrag: Oh, really?

Harris: Oh, yes. He was a minister.

Schrag: Yes.

Harris: I enjoyed it. But I really was frightened by what they were starting to do here. I'm going to be even blunter than that. I saw a couple of examples, or potential examples, where you could call it minority preference, but it was something that appeared to be a lot more discriminatory than that. That sort of thing bothered me. Watt was the assistant mayor, the professional finance guy. His previous experience—it was very funny, you get me talking—was as assistant city manager in Kansas City, Missouri, where he had had his basic experience. That's where I'm from

originally. The example we always used back there, was when Tom Pendergast was the city boss, the political boss, he owned something called the Ready Mixed Concrete Company. The example we always used about that was the creek running down the middle of Kansas City, Brush Creek, was paved from one end of the city to the other. In normal times, the stream was about that big. I remember saying to Watt, this one time, as we got into this argument, I said, look, we're not going to turn the Metro system into another Brush Creek. [laughs]

That was my basic feeling at the time. It was more oriented toward, hey, look. I am, I'm getting blasted by the Herritys of this world. I wanted the competitive angle and the economic angle to be emphasized in every way I knew how. I worried very much. A few years later, I may not have worried as much. I don't know. But that was my focus at the time. And we finally worked up, as I recall, and I don't remember the details, an accommodation that quieted some of my fears that it wasn't going to be an operation that went to various people's cousins. That is what I was worried about.

Schrag: Do you recall, in the emotional sense, if you saw that at the time as a compromise, or as a surrender?

Harris: It was probably a little bit of both. As it looked to me, from a political aspect, that we were going to have to accommodate that. If it became an issue, it was going to be pretty destructive. I fought as hard as I knew how and finally concluded, I am going to have to give on this one if I get the right monitoring, and get on something else.

Schrag: Do you recall where Graham was in that debate? Maybe it was just within the board. Again, here's an issue—Graham gets angry anytime anything threatens to slow things down. And this was something that was going to slow things down. Just having debate on it, and additionally it looked like it might cost extra money. Once you start talking about splitting up big contracts to make it easier for minority firms to bid on them, yes, that is a non-race-based way to increase the diversity of the contracting pool. On the other hand, the more contracts you have to administer, the more complex it gets, and the more chance for delay, and disruption. I just don't know quite where Graham stood. Listening to the

interviews and so forth, he seems to have gotten quite fed up with the District members on a lot of things. The size of parking lots, their desire to restudy some alignments. Any time he felt they were giving into their neighborhood pressure instead of going ahead and building the darn thing he would get upset. But I don't know how exactly he felt about the minority contracting.

Harris: Roy Dodge would know as much about that as anybody, I guess. My answer has to be, I really don't know. I don't remember his getting mad at me at all for the position I was taking. But again, I was taking a position from what I was seeing. I had seen examples, and quite frankly whether you go to Fairfax County or Kansas City, of this kind of contracting. I became a firm advocate of hey, let's go to bids. Let's have open bids. Let's have accountability. I had seen examples of companies hiring—I think before Metro, a couple of times—a black fellow as their executive officer or something like that. I was dealing with all of this at the time, conceptually, as to was this a program that really was designed to help minorities, or if it just opened the door toward the type of examples—

you've probably seen the debate or as I said here—of giving contracts to who you want to. When we were dealing with so much money, and so many contracts, that worried me. It wasn't any knock-down or drag-out on some broad principles. And I think that is where Jackson was too. Although I'm sure he was no bleeding-heart liberal. That's what they called me, of course.

Schrag: Who, Herrity?

Harris: Sure.

Schrag: It's interesting how programs like this get attacked from the right and the left.

Harris: Exactly. The sewer example I gave you is the same thing. The difference, I would maintain, is the public official, the political figure, that's able to put his eye on the objective and say, we'll get there, somehow or another. We won't get it all. The guys at the Constitutional Convention used to have to worry about a whole lot of things too.

Schrag: I want to talk just briefly about your congressional career prior to Stark-Harris. We covered Stark-Harris pretty well, and I wrote up that paragraph.

Harris: [laughs]

Schrag: How much of an issue in each of your campaigns was Metro? For example, just reading the clips, in '74 you and Parris are going back and forth. Some about the buses, and some about the minority contracting. Later, I think, in that same election, Babson was thinking about running, which would have been weird to have two Metro boosters going for the same seat.

Harris: I don't know what Fred was up to there.

Schrag: [laughs] In part, you are broadening your electoral base, obviously, going from just one district within Fairfax to having to appeal to a broader constituency. Did your role in Metro help you reach those people as you branched out? Was it an important factor, or are congressional races decided on completely different issues?

Harris: It's hard to say. Metro was an issue, a debatable issue. But my recollection is that it was not fundamental. If you want to come after me for being for Metro, go ahead and do it. I would kind of like it, because I thought there was a whole lot to brag about as far as what we'd done. I'm trying to think with that first race with Parris, of course. The whole Nixon and Nixon pardon thing was important. He

had been on the other side. He and Fred had run against on another for the chairmanship of the board, the first time we had the chairmanship. I had worked on developing an urban county plan for Fairfax County. But he basically was on the other side as far as the whole developer thing was concerned. I think he took pings at it. As I say, one of the funny things about the business community was it did not seem to comprehend the impetus that Metro could give as far as business and core development was concerned.

Schrag: Once you're in Congress, it's not too long after that, it's late '75, early '76, and there's this one report in particular—I'm trying to set up an interview with the author—that is the first one to suggest cutting back the system. That is actually published the Congressional Research Service. It's commissioned by Congress. I don't know who was behind it. I don't know whether there was an anti-Metro faction already brewing that leads up to the alternatives analysis, or whether this was just coming out of the Ford administration.

Harris: That sort of things was always there, and I dealt with it generalized. I knew with the whole Natcher situation—and I got to know Natcher pretty well, as a matter of fact—I sensed that the basic fight was between the highway lobby and mass transit. The thing wasn't all that complicated, and I never tried to make it more complicated than that. Quite frankly, with your colleagues, and you asked me a lot last time about your relationship with them, the professionals, the guys who do politics for self-satisfaction, you can come out of a whole lot of different milieus and still not be rancorous. I think I told you about my discussion with Tom Eagleton. You simply say, look, these are political realities you have to deal with, okay. I'll be frank with you. As strong as I was as a regional guy, and as much as I did with COG, you're looking at the guy who said there ain't going to be any commuter tax. [laughs] And anyone who wondered why I had to be there didn't understand a whole lot about politics. I really think I didn't see any—well, it was there. But I didn't see any organized effort to assassinate me.

Schrag: [laughs] You didn't really have to pick up the sword for Metro until the Alternatives Analysis is through. Then you bring up funding for it.

Harris: It's hard for me to remember all those days. But as I worked carefully with it, at that point Metro and I had bonded. It was important to me.

Schrag: It was important to you. And with you came Spellman and Fauntroy and wasn't there another WMATA board veteran? Fisher? Was he elected in '74?

Harris: Yes.

Schrag: So you begin to have this alumni club.

Harris: They met in my office. I had worked on putting it together as to how we did it, and who we did it with. Mike Barnes came on too. I guess Mike doesn't come on until '78, maybe. Gladys Spellman, no, I guess it was Mike who talked about one of the last meetings we had in my office, about getting that legislation going. He said, I'll be frank with you. We met, and there was only one person in the room that felt we could get it through. And that was Herb. Which I enjoyed a whole lot. But you did. You had Fauntroy who, of course, did not have a vote on the floor, but a good guy. We did develop that sort

of camaraderie, especially Gladys and I. I'm not going to go back over it again, but the basic strategy was the challenge was to keep it in the District Committee and go that route. In hindsight, it looks so simplistic. But at the time, I don't know how many people shook their heads and said, hey, you understand Public Works and the kind of mallet they swing over their heads? I said, we can figure it out. That was the key. By using the District Committee, and being, of course, a member of it. And chairman of--of course, I did the Bicentennial Committee for the District, and then worked with all the other guys on the committee, most of which were there just to have their name there. But that was basically it. I don't identify an anti-Metro group as such, other than the various constituencies that Natcher and others represented.

Schrag: The one follow-up question I had about Stark-Harris was, it was advertised as the bill that would finish Metro.

Harris: Oh, yeah.

Schrag: And ten years later, 1990, you need another \$2 billion shot in the arm. Do you have any comments?

Obviously you were not responsible for the oversight on how this was spent, but one of the things that happens is the Reagan administration dribbles out the funds at \$250 million a year instead of \$500 million a year, if I understand that right.

Harris: This is the type of attention, and I don't want to give you other examples but there were a number of them, when you get legislation like that passed, the need for follow-up and monitoring. I've given you one of my axioms before, but slightly rephrased, it's amazing, number one, how important it is to do oversight, how easily authorization bills, especially, can be contained, but how effective it can be if you really take it seriously. To this day I use the example, you've got to establish with the fellow that you're there to represent this point of view, and you ain't going to go away. There was a mistake made in follow-up on that to go ahead and move it along. I have to say, though, bluntly, that the fact that another couple billion dollars was needed wasn't a great big surprise. I guess we ended up coming pretty close to what Natcher said it was going to be.

Schrag: I need to go back and look at the books and try to figure out the discounted values in 1969 dollars, and all the rest. But one of the things in all the estimates is a sense of, this is not how much it will cost, this is how much it might cost if everything goes quite right. And that's the language that Congress speaks when it approves something. This is what Bill Boleyn told me was the old Bureau of the Budget standard was a plausible estimate.

Harris: Exactly.

Schrag: Not what people believe in their heart of hearts. This is very important, as I record this. The way I look at this, and maybe you can correct this, is that if I go into a restaurant, and order a \$10 sandwich, I know that I need to add on tax and tip, and that I'll actually pay \$12.50 for that meal. That's just understood. There's the price you see on the menu and the price you pay. Would it be fair to say that a lot of these congressional programs, the price on the bill, people understand— It's different, of course, when it goes from \$1.8 billion to another \$3.8 billion.

Harris: Yes, it is. But having had the experience of seeing what the estimate on the B-1 bomber could do, I wasn't totally surprised at it. I'm going to sound pretty pragmatic, but I'm going to say it anyway. If, in fact, you're going to do something requiring some vision, the proponents of it have got to paint it as attractive as possible, and the opponents, of course, have got to do the opposite. The notion that anybody could sit there in 1968 or 1970 and forecast how much it was going to be, ultimately, is crazy. I didn't realize how pragmatic that was until I saw Jackson Graham in operation, and began studying and realizing the Corps of Engineers, and, for God's sake, the infrastructure guys, the highway guys, that do it. If you come down to it, and realize the inflationary period we were working through, the delays and the intrusions of so many different people in a political milieu such as this, it still represents a remarkable feat, and is not just half-done and costs twice as much. It's a very difficult project to estimate. I don't know if anybody's told you. One of my favorite stories is when we started cutting across G Street there. And I guess you know how close we came to the vaults in the Treasury when

we weaved the tunnel over to Lafayette Square. There was a big discussion about that. But as we were tunneling under Lafayette Square, and if you've heard this before or not, it's a wonderful thing. I was out there looking at it, and I saw the trucks. They weren't suction trucks; they were putting water into the ground. They were up at about 15th and Eye, I guess. I talked to the engineers about this. I said, what's going on here? They said, as you know, when we get under Lafayette Square, we run into the real river. We've got to pump the water out of that as we go. It's a constant pumping operation. We've been doing that for several months, and we noticed that the Veterans Administration Building started sinking, which was up at 15th and Eye. So in order to solve it, they started putting water in up there, in the same amount as they were pumping it out down at Lafayette Square. I don't know if you heard that one or not.

Schrag: That's a new one. And the Treasury—you're talking about the old money vaults underneath. I've heard—it's wonderful. Streetcar tracks were still there, even though Chalk had promised to take them up. Old gasoline tanks, old coal bins. Cody said you had to

dodge the Hot Line to Moscow. The complexities of building. You open up: oh, look at all that stuff down there, that we have to build through.

Harris: It was. And 15th Street was very much that way. If you never saw it, it was hard to imagine what those streetcar tracks looked like at 15th and New York. It was every which way. You said Cody. You're talking about Pfanstiehl.

Schrag: Yes.

Harris: I haven't seen him for I don't know how long.

Schrag: He's going strong. He's been indispensable to this project.

Harris: I bet. He's got it all. He was with the *Evening Star* originally. I have a picture that he took, someplace. It's not here. He worked hard. Okay?

Schrag: Okay. Those were the questions I have, unless you have any last minute thoughts.

Harris: I am sure I will. I have probably mentioned the fact. I was just coming in from Chicago last week and every time I look at that Metro station I get more proud as far as the fight we had with the FAA, as to location. The eight-car, six-car platform

thing was why we couldn't put it down where the terminal was. I always remember, if you talk about Jackson Graham—he thought this, I didn't. The big fight was that FAA wanted us to put it underground. I don't know whether Jackson came up with it himself or not, but the argument was, you have the visitors coming from all over the country, and all over the world, and you want to show them a tunnel, when they could have this magnificent vista across the river at all the monuments? That was the argument we were using the hardest to keep Metro above ground at the airport. But there were a million situations like that, that took constant effort. It's hard to look at the thing. What is great about it is, I travel, and mention it to people, especially in this country, is how many of them are complimentary of the system, the Washington system. New York folks have a hard time doing that, but a lot of them do it too. But I think that the average person who comes into Washington is impressed at the ambience and at the basic efficiency of the system. I think I told you, too, what surprised me the most. I basically visualized it as a way to get people in and out of Washington, after the Montreal fair in '67, near the

football stadiums, move people in and out. What I didn't know, and what I was surprised at, and pleased at, was the amount of midday traffic that Metro would pick up. I just didn't realize how much of that would exist, with people able to run down to Connecticut Avenue and that sort of thing. Okay?

Schrag: Okay. And thank you so much. I'll stop.

[end of interview]